

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-07

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 1481

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LIMDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PN, PQ, US

SUBJECT: HIGHLIGHTS OF 438TH PRC MEETING, MARCH 2

1. TREATY DEVELOPMENT: AMBASSADOR OUTLINED SCHEDULE OF BRIEFINGS AND MEETINGS ON CANAL TREATY NEGOTIATIONS UNDERWAY IN WASHINGTON SINCE RETURN OF NEGOTIATORS. HE INDICATED DATE OF NEXT ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS WOULD DEPEND ON DECISIONS TAKEN AT THESE MEETINGS. AMBASSADOR SAID STORIES IN MORNING PAPERS THAT NEGOTIATORS WERE RETURNING TO CONTADORA LAST WEEK IN MARCH WERE WITHOUT FOUNDATION. CINC REPORTED HE HAD RECEIVED PRELIMINARY REPORT OF NEGOTIATORS' MEETING MARCH 1 WITH SECDEF, DEPSECDEF, JCS, AND ISA. HE SAID THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION OF DURATION-NEUTRALITY-SECURITY ISSUES AND THAT PENTAGON STANCE WAS STRONGLY OPPOSED TO MOST RECENT GOP PROPOSALS.

2. DRUMMOND CASE: AMBASSADOR REPORTED FONMIN HAD ACKNOWLEDGED RECEIPT OF EMBASSY PROTEST BUT THERE WAS NO INDICATION WHETHER GOP INTENDED TO PURSUE MATTER. HE SAID CONSUL'S PRESENCE AT AIRPORT HAD APPARENTLY DISSUADED GOP AUTHORITIES FROM ANY ACTION BEYOND
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MOMENTARY QUESTIONING OF DRUMMOND UPON HIS RETURN TO PANAMA NIGHT OF MARCH 1. GOVERNOR STATED PCC/CZG CONCERNED OVER DRUMMOND CASE ALSO BECAUSE HE IS MANAGEMENT PROBLEM. DRUMMOND'S FREQUENT TRIPS TO U.S. ON ANTI-TREATY ACTIVITIES HAVE EXHAUSTED HIS AVAILABLE LEAVE AND HE MUST NOW TRAVEL ON LEAVE-WITHOUT-PAY STATUS. AT SAME TIME, GOP'S ACTIONS CONVERTED HIM INTO MARTYR

AND LOCAL HERO THEREBY GIVING HIM GREATER VOICE ON
LABOR-MANAGEMENT ISSUES AMONG CANAL EMPLOYEES.

3. GOVERNOR'S WASHINGTON CONSULTATIONS: GOVERNOR
REPORTED ON HIS APPEARANCES BEFORE SENATE AND HOUSE
APPROPRIATIONS HEARINGS AND SAID SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES
SEEMED MORE INTERESTED IN BROADER CANAL TREATY
ISSUES THAN IN SPECIFIC BUDGET QUESTIONS. HE SAID
THAT ENTIRE HOUSE MERCHANT MARINE AND FISHERIES
COMMITTEE MIGHT MAKE TRIP TO ISTHMUS, POSSIBLE DURING
EASTER RECESS. GOVERNOR SAID HE HAD INVITED NEW SECARMY
TO MAKE AN EARLY TRIP TO CZ.

4. WATER RATES: GOVERNOR SAID THAT WHILE IDAAN HAS
BEEN PAYING NEW WATER RATES SINCE OCTOBER IT HAS NOT
YET ACCEPTED SURCHARGES. IDAAN REQUESTED ADDITIONAL
CONSULTATIONS ON THIS MATTER AND GOVERNOR IS NOW
READY TO MEET WITH GENERAL MANAGER SANDOVAL. DURING
RECENT CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS GOVERNOR WAS ASKED ABOUT
GENERAL PROBLEM OF ACCUMULATED GOP DEBT FOR SERVICES
RENDERED BY PCC/PZG.

5. EXERCISES: CINC STATED THAT AS RESULT OF HIS
CONSULTATION WITH AMBASSADOR, HE WAS RECOMMENDING TO
JOINTS CHIEFS CANCELLATION OF "BIFF FURY", A MILITARY
EXERCISE SCHEDULED FOR APRIL INVOLVING THE MOVEMENT
INTO PANAMA OF LARGE NUMBER OF TROOPS AND EQUIPMENT.
HE ACKNOWLEDGED THE PORTENTIAL FOR POLITICAL PROBLEMS
CAUSED BY MASSIVE DISPLAY OF U.S. POWER DURING
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PRESENT CRITICAL PHASE IN NEGOTIATIONS. WITH REGARD
TO COMMAND POST EXERCISE FULL MOON III, IN WHICH
EMBASSY AND PANCANAL PARTICIPATING AS WELL AS
SOUTHCOM, CINC SAID NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS BEING
REDUCED TO DIMINISH CHANCE OF UNAUTHORIZED LEAKS.
FULL MOON III WILL BE CONDUCTED MARCH 8-10.

JORDEN

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